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S - 31,092

NOV 20 1971

Reorganizing U.S. Intelligence

President Nixon has reorganized the Federal Government's intelligence operations which, in essence, gives Central Intelligence Agency Director Richard Helms a broader mandate to coordinate all of the various activities in this field. In the meantime Mr. Nixon also created a National Security Council Intelligence Committee to be chaired by his national security affairs adviser, Dr. Henry A. Kissinger.

These steps have drawn immediate objections from Senators J. William Fulbright, chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, and Stuart Symington on the grounds that Congress was not consulted in advance about them, and that what Mr. Nixon evidently is trying to accomplish is a removal of Congressional overseeing of any intelligence activities by vesting the area almost wholly with Executive immunity. But the fact of the matter is that the President has dealt solely with the Executive Branch in taking this action, as he is unquestionably authorized to do. What irks the Senators is that they cannot, under the new setup, bring Doctor Kissinger before their committee to be interrogated in this area of Government.

What may have prompted Mr. Nixon's action was recent history. That details how President Kennedy got some bad intelligence from the military on the Bay of Pigs, and Lyndon Johnson some even worse intelligence from his White House people and some of the military on Vietnam. The story is that the CIA was not responsible for these bum steers. Consequently, President Nixon now wants the bulk of his intelligence to come through the hands of a polished professional, CIA Director Helms — who was most impressive in an unprecedented appearance before the American Society of Newspaper Editors in Washington last April, and

a trusted adviser, Doctor Kissinger. Certainly that is his privilege, however the Senators may fret.

As Director Helms told the editors: "We (the CIA) not only have no stake in policy debate, but we can not and must not take sides. The role of intelligence in policy formulation is limited to providing facts — the agreed facts — and the whole known range of facts — relevant to the problem under consideration. Our role extends to the estimative function — the projection of likely developments from the facts — but not to advocacy, or recommendations for one course of action or another.

"As the President's principal intelligence officer, I am an adviser to the National Security Council, not a member, and when there is debate over alternative policy options, I do not and must not line up with either side.

"If I should take sides and recommend one solution, the other side is going to suspect — if not believe — that the intelligence presentation has been stacked to support my position, and the credibility of the CIA goes out the window."

To the journalistic profession, whose watchword is objectivity, which equates with a presentation of balanced facts as free from personal emotionalism, bias or bent as it is humanly possible to record these words of Richard Helms are heartening. He is, in a strong sense, one of us. Indeed, as he himself put it, "objectivity puts me on familiar ground as an old wire service hand, but it is even more important to an intelligence organization serving the policymaker."

It is reassuring to realize that a man of this singular dedication and rational approach has been empowered by the President to serve as the nation's foremost intelligence officer. He has our best wishes in an inordinately challenging assignment.

STATINTL

ALBANY, GA.
HERALD

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THE CIA: 'WE TOO ARE HONORABLE MEN'

In his first public address since appointment as director of the Central Intelligence Agency, Richard Helms had several points he wished to make to the American people via the forum provided by the American Society of Newspaper Editors:

Item: "We do not target on American citizens."

Item: "We not only have no stake in policy debates but we cannot and must not take sides."

Item: "The elected officials of the U. S. Government watch over (the Central Intelligence Agency) extensively, intensively and continuously."

Item: "We understand as well as anyone the difficulties and the contradictions of conducting foreign intelligence operations on behalf of a free society."

Item: Finally, "The nation must to a degree take it on faith that we too are honorable men devoted to her service."

Mr. Helms, one of our more impressive civil servants, one reminiscent in several respects of a young J. Edgar Hoover striving diligently to invest his sector of the Federal bureaucracy with a degree of excellence second to none, essayed to counter what he characterized as a "persistent and growing body of criticism which questions the need and the propriety for a democratic society to have a Central Intelligence Agency."

He recognized at the outset that there is extant an "inherent American distaste for peacetime gathering of intelligence." Be that as it may, we have come a long way from the age of our innocence between World Wars I and II. The stars in our eyes no longer twinkle as they once did as

if we had never heard of the dirty business of spying, much less engaged in it. We undertake it because it is a very necessary business to our survival.

Or, as Mr. Helms put it pithily, this is a "fearsome" world, and to live in it we must know not only who the tigers are, but where they lurk, what lengths their fangs and claws are, and if they are likely to ambush us, to attack frontally, or merely to growl.

That is why we have a CIA. We have it because Pearl Harbor finally proved to us that if we kept bungling the intelligence bit, we might soon not have a country. The fact that Army Intelligence didn't let Navy Intelligence in on what it knew in those days, and vice versa, and the State Department didn't communicate with either and perhaps the White House didn't hear from anyone at all, brought the CIA into being by act of Congress at the urgent behest of an alarmed and aroused President Truman.

It has been in business since.

We seldom, almost never, hear of its successes. That is in the nature of the cloak-and-dagger business. To publish information is to "blow the cover" on individuals and organisms, rendering them useless for the future. We do hear of its many duds — abortive coups and invasions and incidents (some of which, doubtless, the CIA may never have heard of at all, but of course cannot say one way or the other).

We do, in the necessary aura of mystery that envelopes the agency, suspect any and every thing of having CIA sponsorship. Some of the rumors are outlandish. Mr. Helms

CIA is somehow involved in the world drug traffic. We are not." Ah, well, it was a great tale while it lasted, and the ramifications were endless. As with drugs, we daresay, so with a great many other issues and areas.

But the CIA's raison d'etre stems from stern reality, not fun and games. In Mr. Helms' words, "the United States, as a world power, either is involved or may with little warning find itself involved in a wide range and variety of problems which require a broad and detailed base of foreign intelligence for the policy-makers." The director emphasized that neither he nor the CIA makes policy. The elected and appointed representatives of the people of the United States perform that task. But the CIA does gather and correlate information — factually, objectively, painstakingly — on which current and future policy must be based.

As Director Helms counsels, we must "take it on faith" that his agency is reliable, steadfast, devoted and honorable. That is difficult in a free society, accustomed to the exercises of checks and balances upon all governmental authority. But, whatever the railings against reality, we have no alternative other than to trust the CIA, the President, the Congress and the Government. Our lives are literally in their hands.